

CAMEROONIAN HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS INITIATIVE

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Slogan « Pour une réponse humanitaire efficace »

CHARTER

PREAMBLE

The members of the Cameroonian humanitarian organizations initiative abbreviated as C.H.I.O, platform for dialogue and consultations of NGOs in Cameroon, parties to the present charter.

whereas this framework for dialogue and consultations of NGOs/CSOs was born to group around the common themes, actors in order to create a synergy of actions between the humanitarian actions ;

Promising that signatory members adhering to this platform charter adopts guiding principles of dialogue and consultation, partnership, mutual respect, transparency and respect for public ethics and morals; and respect humanitarian principles and the principles of the red crescent and the red cross; Promoting all forms of collaboration with all other organizations ,platforms, networks ,and institutions at the national, sub regional ,African and global levels sharing the same values or missions;

The signatories of the Cameroonian Humanitarian Organizations Initiative which support all that promote the emergence of national humanitarian actors, their development and the development of their initiatives for better care of populations have agreed as follows;

SECTION 1: GENERAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 1: Name

Article 1: name/purpose

The Cameroonian Humanitarian Organizations Initiative abbreviated as C.H.O.I is in French “Initiative des Organisations Humanitaires Camerounaises (I.O.H.C). It is a platform for dialogue and consultation of local NGOs/CSOs in Cameroon , which puts at the center of its concerns the presence of a force of proposal dialogue and interaction between its members and between them and other actors of humanitarian action at national and international level. The members of the platform parties to this Charter , recognize the legal force of the measures set out therein and undertake to apply them. The charter of the dialogue and consultation platform has the value of an internal regulation and is assessed as a code of conduct , deontology or ethics

Article 2: Purpose

The C.H.O.I is committed to harmonizing the programs and activities of national NGOs and CSOs in order to act more effectively in the interest of vulnerable populations on topics in their favour. This in order to seek greater effectiveness of their actions on the ground through:

- The rationalization of humanitarian interventions in Cameroonian territory ;
- Enhancing the visibility of actions and stakeholders ;
- Empowerment of beneficiaries

Article 3: Expectations

The state of affairs of national humanitarian NGOs /CSOs shows that they face specific problems . Thus the C.H.O.I formulates its expectations at four levels:

- ✓ Vis- a-vis the public authorities (advocacy for a better collaboration and taking into account humanitarian actions in public policies)
- ✓ With regards to the donors (advocacy , awareness raising, for the removal of barriers and the relaxation of certain procedures ,the facilitation of the IO-CSO pairing system and follow up)
- ✓ Vis-à-vis International Organizations (advocacy on the system of collaboration with national NGOs/CSOs-pairing-permanent framework of exchange between IO and NGOs and follow up of initiatives taken)

- ✓ Vis-à-vis united nations organizations and Humanitarian Coordination (support to follow-up of ISTANBUL commitments on localization and advocacy on the best consideration of NGOs /CSOs in the humanitarian response)

Towards the members respect of the humanitarian principles (Humanism, Neutrality, Impartiality, operational independence)

CHAPTER 2: PRINCIPLES-PURPOSE

Article 4: Principles

To guide the activities of the **C.H.O.I**, humanitarian NGOs/CSOs (Non Governmental Organizations And Civil Society Organizations) in Cameroon observe three fundamental principles:

1st principle: Networking the experience of the Cameroonian NGOs/CSO Humanitarian dialogue and dialogue platform remains convinced that networking is the only guarantee of effectiveness in the distribution of massive and extensive assistance to affected communities. The success lies in valuing skills and creating synergies with all those working for the development of affected communities. This is undoubtedly the way to go to be flexible and effective.

2nd principle : Empowerment of national actors

This principle reflects the willingness of the CHOI to limit its involvement in supporting national and international actors to local humanitarian and or development initiatives.

This is concretely:

- Respect the autonomy of the national NGO/CSO by ensuring that its assistance leads to maturation
- Encourage national actors to organize themselves by pooling their activities and program.

3rd principle: Neutrality

The principle of neutrality limits the role of national NGOs/CSOs to that of an interface and catalyst agent. While remaining open to all forms of partnership with all the good wills that support the humanitarian initiative and local development, the platform for dialogue and

consultation of NGOS/CSOs humanitarian in Cameroon must respect the identity and specificity of each partner and at the same time preserves its autonomy.

Article 5: objectives

✓ *General objective*

The **C.H.O.I** intends to be a framework for dialogue and an interface for concerted actions leading to a better contribution of local actors in the humanitarian response in Cameroon.

✓ *Specific objectives*

The **C.H.O.I** proposes in concrete terms :

- House structure and animate a framework for sharing experience between its members and others;
- Promote the capacity building of national NGOs/CSOs in emergency response and cross-cutting issues
- Encourage and strengthen advocacy and lobbying actions based on the results of independent monitoring ;
- Distribute responsibilities in the forum with defined focal points .
- Make coordination with IOs , UN Agencies and government partners
- Accompany the identification and,sharing ,and localization of needs and humanitarian actions.
- Set up and continuously update a map of national humanitarian NGOs/CSOs in Cameroon
- Facilitate the joint implementation of field activities between national actors
- To facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills between members and between members and community structures.

SECTION 2: ORGANIZATION –MODE OF ACTION

CHAPTER 3: ORGANIZATION

Article 6 : Definition and role of the **C.H.O.I**

(1) Definition

The **C.H.O.I** is a coalition of national humanitarian actors who come together to share their experiences , knowledge,skills,resources and ideas in order to solve problems and seize opportunities of common interest that can arise from any planning documents the humanitarian and resilience of affected communities.

(2) Role

-Open access to the financing of identified humanitarian projects at the national, regional, and international levels.

-Manage to facilitate advocacy and manage any conflicts that may arise between all parties involved in the humanitarian response in Cameroon

-Facilitate coordination ,strategic and operational planning, joint assessments ,capacity building ,information sharing, complementarity and increased level of influence.

Article 7: missions

The main mission of C.H.O.I is to facilitate consultation between actors and their access to information .Its missions consist in:

§ Develop, structure and animate a framework for sharing experiences and technology among its members and between its members and others;

§ Develop, structure and animate a framework for sharing of collaboration, experience sharing and working with international NGOS;

§ Promote the capacity building of NGOs/CSOs in emergency preparedness and response;

§ Encourage and strengthen advocacy and lobbying actions based on the results of independent monitoring;

§ Distribute responsibilities in the platform with defined focal points

§ Coordinate with other actors involved in preparedness and humanitarian response,United Nations Agencies and government partners;

§ Support the identification, sharing, and taking into account of local humanitarian actors in the implementation of the humanitarian response plan

§ Establish and continuously update a mapping of humanitarian NGOs and CSOs /Development in Cameroon

Article 8: strategic plan

In accordance with its missions, the **C.H.O.I** undertakes to define ,and with the support of the humanitarian community ,to implement an annual action plan that respects the different action plans of each member organization on the basis of the strategic orientations.The strategic plan has defined its priorities in the priority and non exhaustive topics on the short ,medium or long term below;

- ❖ Collaboration between local and international humanitarian actors
- ❖ Representatives within organizations supporting local,national,and international humanitarian response.
- ❖ Stimulating support from the government and the humanitarian community to local humanitarian actors
- ❖ Internal and external communication and where appropriate ,periodic publications
- ❖ Capacity building of local NGOs
- ❖ The provision of useful information and opportunities for its members by any support possible (websites and others)
- ❖ Setting up and updating a mapping of humanitarian NGOs/CSOs
- ❖ Support towards the empowerment of non-institutional humanitarian actors

Chapter 4: OPERATION OF THE PLATFORM

The organs of the **C.H.O.I** operate in accordance with the rules of conduct of international humanitarian law,the UNHCR code of conduct and ICRC.

Article 9: Statutory bodies composition

(1)composition

At the structural level,the organs of the **C.H.O.I** are;

- The General Assembly
- The General Secretariat
- The monitoring committee
- A Regional Representative

(2)composition and role

The General Assembly

The general assembly is the deliberative body of the CHOI .Its role is to define strategic orientations ,validate the action plans ,the periodic reports and to to ensure arbitrations if necessary and to give discharge to the general secretariat for its actions .

It comprises of:

- Statutory organs, founding NGOs, regional representatives
- Representative(s) of Donor(s)
- Representative(s) of of other non-institutional humanitarian actors
- Representative(s) of the public administrations taking the strategic decisions of the platform

Convened by the SG or 2/3 of the members, the general assembly meets once a semester in ordinary session .It can also meet in extraordinary as many times as possible.

❖ General Secretariat

It is the governing body of the **C.H.O.I**. It acts on behalf of the forum and reports to the general assembly. It is designated for three (03) years renewal. The first officers of the General Secretariat are appointed by the founding members .It is composed of :

- 01 secretary General
- 01 deputy Secretary General
- 01 Treasurer
- 01 Auditor

The Secretary General ,assistant secretary general and treasurer are designated /or elected by their peers through the most democratic means possible. In case of an election,the principle of one organization one vote ,will be the rule.

-The Secretary General is the legal representative of the C.H.O.I in all acts of civil life; reports to the General Assembly ;establishes programs and activity reports ;convenes and chairs the the meetings of the General Assembly; convenes Ordinary General Meetings and extraordinary;

-The Assistant Secretary General ,who assists the SG, obtains delegation of authority ,if necessary, and can replace the SG in the event of the latter being unable to act. In addition, he is in charged of activities of of communication and public relations under the coordination of the Secretary General.

-The treasurer is responsible for the resources of all kinds of the C.H.O.I. It is designated by the GA to ensure all activities of inventory, collection, securing the resources of the **C.H.O.I**

-The Auditor is responsible for monitoring, supervision and controlling of accounting operations. It therefore ensures the good keeping of the accounts of the **C.H.O.I**.

❖ Monitoring committee

It consists of at least three CSOs/NGOs for monitoring the activities of the C.H.O.I. It is designated for three (03) years renewable. under the coordination of the General Secretariat, he is in charge of:

-Follow-up of the strategic orientations of the **C.H.O.I**;

-Design and propose annual action plans modeled on the expectations of member organizations;

-The evaluation of national NGOs

-Follow-up of collaborative actions with IOs.

Other tasks maybe entrusted in him by the Secretary General.

❖ A Regional Manager

It is an NGO/CSO designated by its peers for (03) years renewable in each humanitarian zone of Cameroon with the agreement of the General Secretariat. These officials are regional focal points of the **C.H.O.I**; implement the annual action plans agreed at the General Assembly and report directly to the General Secretariat.

Article 10: Members of the Platform

(01) Definition

The ex officio members of the **C.H.O.I** are all national NGOs/CSOs fulfilling the following conditions:

-Accept the terms of this charter;

-Conduct relevant field activities in humanitarian and /or development themes ;

-Comply with the guidelines of the platform

-Participate in meetings and activities of the platform.

(02) Quality of members

In order to join the platform, the registered organization will have to submit a membership application letter to the SG of the General Assembly. The request will have to be studied at the General Assembly. There must be an agreement of at least 2/3 of all members for admission. These members have the right to vote. The member shall designate and register the principal representative and the deputy. The member will have to ensure the presence of the principal representative. In the case of its unavailability, the member will have to send the second deputy representative. Note that the application may be rejected. In this case the rejection is motivated.

(03) Loss of membership

Membership is lost:

§ With the cessation of activity of the member

§ In case of non-compliance with the commitments made in this platform's charter;

§ In case of incapacity of the member to play his role and to assume his responsibilities ;

§ By revocation for grave breach of this platform charter. The revocation is pronounced by at least 2/3 of the members;

§ In case of other various reasons preventing the proper functioning of the platform

§ End of his program

§ Explicit request addressed to the platform

Article 11: Rights and obligations of the members

(1) Rights of members

Each member has the right to;

-To the same level of information

-To be a voter and eligible

-To the civil protection of the forum within the framework of the acts for which it has a mandate;

-The sponsorship of the forum;

-To participate in decision making under the conditions set out in this charter ;

-To access all the free documents and services of the forum

(2) Obligations of members

The members of the platform have the obligation :

- To appoint two (principal and deputy) representatives and ensure their participation in the meetings;
- To implement decisions of the General Assembly ;
- To respect the positions and other interventions of members during the dialogue sessions
- to attend dialogue sessions. In case of major impediment , the member is required to be represented ;
- Respect this charter and all decisions made by the governing bodies.
- Participate in forum meetings and activities.
- Suscitate the community mobilization of its members and supporters during the forums major events

Article 12;- Frequency of meetings

(1) Meetings of the General Assembly

the General Assembly meets in ordinary session once every six months.

However ,extraordinary sessions are held as much as possible with regard to the themes to be developed and and the the specific problems to be solved that may arise from the implementation of the project.

(2) Meetings of the General Secretariat

The meetings of the General Secretariat of the **C.H.O.I.** Can be held as many times as possible .These meetings are convened by the SG.

(3) Meetings of Regional Representatives

They follow the same process and can be supervised by a (designated)member of the General Secretariat in each humanitarian zone.

(4) Decision making mode

The **C.H.O.I** brings together various actors .As a result ,it favours a participatory and inclusive approach .Decisions are made collegially ,based on consensus .If the consensus is not reached, decisions are taken by a 2/3 majority of the members present.

Article 13;- Communication within the platform

Communication is a fundamental element of relationship regulation :

§ of the platform with its members and (ii) of the platform with the public ;

§ the internal communication within the platform is done through the following supports :

§ reports of meetings ,minutes, circulars, press releases, decisions, memos, messages carried etc.

§ the platform communicates with its external environment through the dissemination of the results of studies reports , reports and minutes of dialogue meetings, Government Civil society ,mission reports ,newsletters ,decisions, orders, circulars, fact sheets, educational guides, directories, databases on value chains. The platform also uses the communication channels adapted to the target audience;

§ The organization of information and awareness raising campaigns for private actors and the public, and restitution sessions at the end of a seminar at the central and regional level,where appropriate.

Article 14;- Confidentiality clause

-The person in charge of the communication must neither publish nor distribute information contrary to copy right or related rights ,the law applicable to databases,the right to the image or the to respect for the private life who would violate any other law or regulation in force;-The confidentiality of the information disseminated via the person incharge of the communication is guaranteed by the respect of the clauses of confidentiality and diffusion of documents established by the platform;

-The person incharge of the communication must ensure the privacyof the members of the platform .This implies not to distribute non-public telephone numbers or email addresses except with the permission of the authors ,persons or companies;

-The general conditions of use of the website data are developed by the person in charge of communication, validated by the platform and posted on the website.

SECTION 3: FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 5: MOBILIZATION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Article 15: Resources

(1) Financing platform activities

During the first fiscal year, the cost of the platform's activities will be covered by a technical and financial partner. In the second year, the platform will ensure its financial contribution which it will have to increase gradually in order to cover costs of the platform. However, the platform could explore other sources of funding. Once the platform is formally created, the key actors decide together on the modalities and the plan for its progressive funding by the members. The General Secretariat has the authority to accept and receive on behalf of the platform all donations, legacies, subsidies, contributions required to finance the activities of the said platform.

(2) Management modalities.

For the needs of support by a technical and financial partner

The funds of the platform are managed according to the administrative, financial and accounting procedures of the TFP. In this sense, the secretary is the principal authorizing officer of the funds. In disbursement procedures, the signature of the secretary General is the main one, followed by that of the head of the Treasurer and /or that of deputy secretary. Once two of these signatories have been affixed, one of the attorneys may perform the required transaction in the bankers establishment.

For service needs and the achievement of results, the C.H.O.I under the guise of the General Secretariat may recruit staff who fulfill criteria. It can also make use of a particular expertise (cabinete for cartography) if the means allow it.

SECTION 4-MISCELLANEOUS AND FINAL PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 6 CONFLICTS AMENDMENTS TO THE CHARTER

Article 16-CONFLICT RESOLUTION

(1) Negotiation

Any dispute arising between members of **C.H.O.I** concerning the interpretation or application of this charter or even because of their activities, shall be settled by negotiation or by any other peaceful means.

(2) Arbitration

In the of a possible continuation of the conflict referred to in the preceding paragraph, it is by common agreement submitted to arbitration. In case of dissatisfaction of one or the other party, the court of the seat can be seized.

Article 17 ;- Mode of revision of the charter

Any member of the platform may propose amendments to this charter. The amendments are proposed during the fora or meetings of the actors in particular in their ordinary sessions at the request of 2/3 of the members of the platform. The amendments are adopted by a majority of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the ex-officiomembers of the platform.

Article 18: Language

French and English are the languages officially used in the dialogue platform. Any communication made in one of the two languages is translated into the other.

Article 19:-Publication

(1) Insertion in the newspaper of legal announcements

The insertion into newspaper of legal announcements concerns the minutes of the General Assembly of creation of the C.H.O.I.

(2) Notification

A copy of the charter is given to each member of the platform.

(3) Provision

To allow wide consultation, the charter is posted on the website of the platform.

Article 20;- Entry into force

The charter of the C.H.O.I comes into force on the date of signature by the stakeholders.

In witness whereof, duly authorized thereto by their organizations, have signed this charter. The founding members of the C.H.O.I are the signatories of this charter whose list is attached.

